

## Glocality, Byzantine Style: A Study in Pre-Electronic Culture

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Although the concept of glocality serves as a useful framework for understanding the matrix of contemporary cultural phenomena, our fascination with our own times has perhaps blinded us to the history of similar responses to mass media and “world culture” in pre-electronic societies.<sup>1</sup> Conquering peoples typically seek to enhance their power through the export of their cultural institutions. This top-down cultural alignment, reinforced through the introduction of imperial mass media, sometimes goes to the extreme of supplanting local languages with the language of Empire. These efforts lead to inevitable clashes between dominant/“global” and subject/“local” societies, with results that are often surprising in their variety.

In this article, I hope to demonstrate how the history of traditional theatre in the eastern Mediterranean, culminating in the early years of the Eastern Roman or “Byzantine” Empire,<sup>2</sup> can be used as a case study in what might be called glocal cultural historiography. Traditionally dated from the fourth through fifteenth centuries CE, the Eastern Empire, although politically Roman, was rooted in a sophisticated Hellenistic cultural scene first established in Classical Athens. Byzantines used their “global” Hellenistic culture to project their power and mystique throughout the known world. However, this elite culture was dynamic and open to interventions from non-Hellenistic localities, interventions that by the sixth century CE had led to the downfall of one of the institutions most cherished by the Greeks—their state-supported theatre.

### **Athens is Everywhere, and Everywhere is Athens**

For millennia, Greek culture was transmitted to subject populations from North Africa to today’s Afghan/Tadjik border through the mass media of the stage and the written word. Alexander the Great’s conquests in the fourth century BCE marked the beginning of international Greek cultural hegemony, and a Hellenistic “world culture.” The construction of Greek urban areas complete with theatres and the foundation of Greek-language schools were critical to the projects of Alexander and his successors. In spite of a wealth of indigenous languages and cultural traditions,

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locals aspiring to elite status were trained in Greek *gymnasia* where they studied the Greek classics. So powerful was the attraction of Greek education that, as Rome conquered mainland Greece and acquired the numerous Greek-speaking colonies of Asia Minor, it embraced the language of its “subjects”; all the Roman elite became effectively bilingual. Rome’s embrace of Greek learning, in turn, made the abandonment of Latin as the language of imperial administration almost inevitable, and final “hellenization” of Rome began in 330 CE when the Empire moved its capital to Constantinople, a city that sat in the heart of the Greek-speaking world.<sup>3</sup>

Apart from a handful of more ancient works by poets like Homer and Sappho, the Greek curriculum was drawn from a corpus largely of Athenian origin; dating primarily from the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, the Athenian classics continued to serve as the foundation for Greek education well into the Middle Ages. Theatrical works were a part of the curriculum from the beginning; before Alexander the Great’s time, successful Athenian dramatists would sometimes retire to Greek communities in Sicily or Macedonia and (local productions notwithstanding) leave the written record of their plays behind them. However, with the foundation of Alexandria, the brand-new “City of Alexander” on the Nile Delta, and the transfer of the entire corpus of Athenian drama to its library, the legacy of the Great Dionysia now acquired an enhanced, global profile.<sup>4</sup> Stone theatres and the written word, the mass media of the day, were at the vanguard of the Hellenistic global cultural project.

The need for copies of Attic dramas in Greek schools created a cottage industry in Alexandria for scholars who pored over each play and, on separate papyrus scrolls, critiqued them for their rhetorical value as well as their authenticity. Alexandria became a center for the diffusion of dramatic works throughout the Greek-speaking world, and teachers could now include selected works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, and even Menander in their classes.<sup>5</sup> Because Greek education was interdisciplinary by nature, these dramas were not studied for aesthetic purposes, as *objets d’art*; instead they were understood to have a practical, functional value as exemplars of proper public speech. Some knowledge about traditional staging techniques may have been passed on as a matter of historical curiosity, but the chief goal of higher education was to create trained public intellectuals, not actors; upon graduation, students would have had key passages of the drama ‘in their memory lock’d’ as they pursued their civic careers.<sup>6</sup>

This non-traditional use of drama in what some regard as an alien context—i.e., the political or intellectual sphere—has led modern scholars to dismiss the Hellenistic use of Greek drama as one of mere functionality and lament the depths to which tragedy and comedy had fallen by Roman and Byzantine times.<sup>7</sup> The best antidote to this kind of thinking is to consider what today’s playwrights would give to have their own words on the lips of any prominent public figure. In the Greek gymnasia from antiquity onward, classic plays were drummed into the memories of every aspiring intellectual or politician beginning in childhood; the drama’s vocabulary

and moral sentiments were embedded in their thinking as well as their discursive practice.

Throughout the Eastern Empire's history, Athenian literature was the gold standard of educated Greek speech and remained a key point of reference when discussing issues of the day. Thanks to Alexander the Great's efforts, Athens was never simply a place on the map; it was what Joshua Meyrowitz might call a "generalized elsewhere," a universally known place that served as a paradigm and frame through which local issues could be interpreted.<sup>8</sup> Athens was everywhere, and everywhere else was defined as a local instance of Athenian life and culture.

Meanwhile, outside the Academy and imperial court another form of Greek, *koine* ("common"), had developed independently and remained the dominant form of spoken Greek for purposes of business and daily street interactions. Given that the Greek language functioned at two basic levels simultaneously, the use of Classical Athens as the ultimate *locus* of elite political and literary discourse (for some two thousand years, to boot) has puzzled modern scholars. For generations this elite linguistic culture has been dismissed as artificial or perversely antiquarian, and its practitioners—the Byzantine elite—dismissed as if they were lunatics running their own imperial asylum.<sup>9</sup> The confusion is understandable; but as Anglophone theatre scholars we nevertheless write in a vernacular that has several centuries' worth of exemplars to enrich our own discourse. The "classics" we cite may extend only to Elizabethan or Jacobean England (Chaucer and early Tudor drama being perhaps too obscure for our tastes), but the presence of these works reminds us that we work within the context of our own "generalized other," and consciously reframe contemporary issues through this now universalized place.

### **A Glocal Defense of a Global Institution**

One of the more colorful examples of how Athenian models informed Byzantine culture is a little-known Greek oration by the rhetor Choricus of Gaza from the early sixth century CE. As recorded by a Byzantine copyist the speech carries the title "On Behalf of Those Who Imitate Life in Dionysus' [Theatre]," but it is better known today as the "Defense of the Mimes."<sup>10</sup> In this instance, a Palestinian intellectual<sup>11</sup> sets out to defend the dignity of local actors by addressing theatre as both a global and a local phenomenon; every major critique of acting and actors from Plato's time to his own is raised and refuted, complete with citations of classical and biblical literature. Choricus' knowledge of classical drama is also on display and his citations as whimsical as they are pointed.

Choricus delivers his defense as an entry in a rhetoric contest and admits that he has taken on the subject of mimes precisely because of the argument's degree of difficulty: "The more the mimes fall, unjustly, under so much shameful suspicion, the more I am determined to support them, since I am convinced that dangerous contests in law are the greatest test of an advocate's worth."<sup>12</sup> Rhetoric contests

were an opportunity for teachers like Choricus to show off their erudition and demonstrate to a well-to-do audience (read: potential clients) how skillfully he could craft speeches on even the most difficult topic. The ability to cite any number of classical sources, both directly and indirectly, in the course of the speech was a prerequisite; the ability to marshal these Athenian “witnesses” on behalf of a local client and before a contemporary audience was another.

The charges Choricus refutes are a mixture of classical and contemporary concerns: beginning with a nod to Plato’s *Republic*, he argues that theatrical *mimesis* is as dignified a profession as any other, marshalling episodes from Homer’s *Iliad*, in which the gods assume various human disguises, and citing Plato’s own passion for plays by Sophron of Syracuse, reputedly the first writer of comic mimes. Choricus then turns to the accusation that mimes’ lives are “shameless and filled with falsehood”<sup>13</sup>—a common perception rooted in the Greek rhetorical tradition<sup>14</sup> as well as scripture (see below). Choricus points out that every profession in Gaza has its share of miscreants and, confronting his audience, reminds them that even the students in attendance are dissolute. He lays down an ultimatum:

What can we do, my friends? For it is time to either banish all arts from the cities ignominiously—for none can prove its pupils are entirely *without sin*—or to stop disparaging the mimes’ profession because of the wickedness of those who live immoderately.<sup>15</sup>

The word translated here as “without sin” (*anamartitos*) is decidedly unclassical; used only a handful of times before the advent of Christianity, it would have been recognized as a reference to a Gospel episode, *John* 8.7, in which Jesus saves an adulteress from stoning by demanding that he who is *anamartitos* cast the first stone. Although Christianity had become the official religion of the Empire by Choricus’ time, this citation would have had a special resonance due to its local associations.

In his defense of the most popular genre of his time—the adultery play—Choricus reverts to the Athenian *locus* and appeals to the god Dionysus’ desire to ease mankind’s burdens by any means necessary:

When [Dionysus] was asked by his servant, according to Aristophanes’ witness, “Can he say some of the usual stuff, that the audience always laughs at?” he replied “Yes, by Zeus, whatever he wants.” Thus the god is so good humoured and benevolent that he allows all kinds of jokes.<sup>16</sup>

On the face of it, this appeal is frivolous: even if some in the audience still believed in Dionysus, citing an Ancient comedy hardly rises to the level of serious evidence. Assuming that Choricus knows what he is doing, however, we must look beyond

the surface and consider the broader context. To the more discerning audience members (i.e., the rhetoric contest's judges), Athens would have been a legitimate if not a required point of reference for a number of reasons, not least because it was the cradle of traditional theatre and old dramatic competitions were held in Dionysus' honor. To parents of prospective students, on the other hand, this demonstrated Choricus' ability to quote passages from plays their children would be expected to learn.

Perhaps the most daring passage in the oration—and certainly the longest—is Choricus' defense of actors who played drag queens and/or male prostitutes—the term used here is *peporneumenos*, “he who has been fucked.” The Christian audience in sixth-century Gaza would have been taught to regard homosexuality as a sin—Choricus himself refers to it as a disease<sup>17</sup>—so rather than defend homosexuality he focuses instead on heterosexual actors who play gay characters. Here he navigates between Athens and Gaza in order to refute one of the oldest anti-theatrical myths, i.e., that actors are whom they play:

Do you think acting does any harm? Tell me this, do you suppose it feminizes the spectator or the performer? Of course you will say both, but I will say neither. For the soul does not change along with the costumes, even when someone speaks in harmony with his external appearance. A lion skin did not make Aristophanes's Xanthias any braver, nor did a womanly robe make Peleus's son a coward. Even if I take off my civilian attire and put on a soldier's armour, it would not make me a warrior.<sup>18</sup>

Choricus begins with a reference to *The Frogs*, as well as to an apocryphal tale that Achilles' father, Peleus, once tried to pass the young hero off as his daughter, to keep him from going to Troy. These humorous anecdotes demonstrate his knowledge of Hellenistic “world culture” and provide vivid (albeit fictional) examples to rebut the claim of “type casting.” But to clinch the argument he “goes local” and uses himself as an example. Gestures of personal humility were commonplace in rhetoric, but here Choricus points up his own cowardice to defend actors who played the most controversial roles on the Byzantine stage.

Choricus' “Defense of the Mimes” provides a wealth of information about the contemporary theatre scene, and its reliance on a classical Athenian framework also testifies to the intense interactions between local and global cultures during a critical period in theatre history. Even in sixth-century Palestine, public intellectuals evoked Plato and Aristophanes in one breath, and themselves or their live audiences in the next. Although Athens would continue to dominate public discourse throughout the Eastern Roman Empire's history, traditional state-supported theatre was on the way out. The circumstances surrounding the “death of the theatre” are complex, but

in the next section I will describe one of the chief elements in its demise: a local anti-theatrical culture that, over the course of several centuries, came to dominate the global scene.

### Judaism, Christianity, and the Revenge of the Local

As accustomed as we are to cultural narratives that posit global forces overwhelming local traditions, there are instances in which local responses to “world culture” undermine and even reverse the imperialist, top-down paradigm of cultural transmission. The influence of Jewish law on traditional theatre is a case in point; although Jews throughout the Mediterranean embraced Greek learning and often preferred speaking Greek over Hebrew and Aramaic, they rejected Greek theatre as an alien cultural institution.

The first signs of this rebellion become evident in the Septuagint, a Greek translation of Jewish sacred writings commissioned in the mid-second century BCE. The Septuagint demonstrates how acting became a metaphor for the sin of feigned piety, but registers observant Jews’ objections to the theatre subtly by using Greek, the language of Hellenistic global culture, to attack a global Greek institution. In the Septuagint version of *Job* when Job’s friend Elihu admonishes him for being so demanding of God, he uses the Greek word for actors, *hypocritai*, to describe those who adopt a mere show of devotion.<sup>19</sup> Whereas those sincerely seeking God will repent their sins, “[t]hose who are *actors* at heart prefer anger; they will not be helped when they need it. Let their soul die, then, in its arrogance.”<sup>20</sup> This condemnation of religious play-acting assumes an audience of Jews who knew theatre, knew the craft of acting (*hypokrisia*), and rejected them.<sup>21</sup> In later years, Talmudic literature confirms what the Septuagint only hinted at, and the Jerusalem/Palestinian Talmud in particular is rich with anti-theatrical commentary.<sup>22</sup>

The later use of theatrical terminology in the Greek Gospels, then, reflects already-traditional attitudes among assimilated, Greek-speaking Jews towards actors and the theatre.<sup>23</sup> When accounts of Jesus’ life were first rendered in Greek, the authors of the Gospels drew directly from the Septuagint tradition; in Matthew’s hands the actor once again becomes a metaphor:

Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the actors [*hypokritai*] do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men.<sup>24</sup>

Jesus himself would have spoken in Aramaic, but in Greek Jesus condemns the Scribes and Pharisees as “hypocrites.” Given the Roman paganist emphasis on piety as a public, social practice, however, this critique reflects on the Empire’s

religious culture as well.

The Septuagint and the Gospels together created a foundation for later critiques, and the early Church Fathers' knowledge of contemporary theatrical practice informed their condemnation of theatrical, social, and religious 'play-acting' through the fifth century CE and beyond.<sup>25</sup> As was common at the time, many of the Fathers (St. Augustine being just one example) converted to Christianity as adults; prior to baptism they would have attended shows and received a solid education in classical Greek. This combination of experiences would enable them to use Greek theatrical terminology at numerous levels of meaning.<sup>26</sup> Theological objections rooted in the Jewish tradition remained predominant, however; Archbishop Severus of Antioch (c. sixth century CE) drew on both the Genesis myth of man's creation and the Christian doctrine of the incarnation of Christ in his critique of a typical mimes' slapstick routine:

Do we not invite the wrath and anger of God when we laugh upon seeing a man assaulted—God's creation, into whose face God breathed the breath of life so that he might be respected even by the angels, and who was also honored by the Word of God, which became man for our sake . . . a countenance honored to such high degree, nay even one who has been doubly celebrated, don't you think it strikes terror and fright into the very Heavenly Host itself [if] he is outrageously assaulted and put to ridicule?<sup>27</sup>

These objections notwithstanding, the theatre remained a popular institution; it was Emperor Justinian I (527-565 CE) who eventually withdrew imperial funding for theatrical entertainments, effectively ending a millennium-long cultural tradition.

Justinian's career was multi-faceted but defined in many ways by his understanding of his role as the Defender of the Faith; a true Christian autocrat, from the very beginning of his reign he persecuted heretics, stripping them of their rights and hounding them into exile.<sup>28</sup> He was so hostile to paganism that he closed the famed School of Athens that had been in operation since Plato's time. To emphasize the triumph of Christianity, Justinian commissioned many elaborately decorated churches—including the great domed cathedral of Hagia Sophia that stands in Istanbul to this day.

Before he was crowned emperor, Justinian had gained a reputation as a producer of spectacles, throwing some of the greatest games Constantinople had ever seen. He even took the unprecedented step of marrying a former mime and crowning her empress. But by the sixth century the Byzantine entertainment industry had grown into a massive bureaucracy and was heavily reliant on the imperial purse.<sup>29</sup> Once in power, Justinian needed to focus on a myriad of costly public works projects and overseas military campaigns.



At least one of Justinian's detractors attributed the theatres' closure to greed and wasteful spending.<sup>30</sup> Given his stern advocacy of Christian piety, however, it is more likely that the theatres were cut off for theological reasons. There were personal and moral reasons as well: Empress Theodora had begun her career as a famous comic actress—a fact which should have inclined Justinian favorably to the theatre. But as an outrageous pseudo-biography of Theodora from the time shows, actresses at this time were treated like prostitutes and expected to be sexually available to their fans from childhood onward.<sup>31</sup> Theodora's tales of the stage and its degradations, assuming they reached her righteous husband's ear, would only have hastened the public theatre's demise.

### **Conclusion**

This brief analysis has covered only a small portion of a vast emerging field in theatre studies. But I hope I have demonstrated how the cultural history of the Eastern Roman Empire, and the history of Byzantine theatre in particular, merits our attention as an example of pre-modern glocality. In spite of widespread acceptance of Attic Greek as the language of elite culture, and in spite of later orators' habits of deliberately blending (or confusing) Classical Athens with their own physical space, the boundary lines of Hellenistic culture remained fluid and open to outside influences. Democratic Athens remained the touchstone for public discourse long after Athens (and the rest of the known world) had submitted to the Macedonian and then the Roman yoke; however, its hegemony was challenged by a schismatic Middle Eastern sect whose local Jewish roots were evident chiefly in its rejection of traditional theatre.

Great political and cultural events are best understood as complex in their origins, so it would be an exaggeration to attribute them to one factor alone. But in looking back it is clear that a grassroots reaction against global theatrical culture, expressed long before the Common Era and made more intense with the rise of Christianity, played a substantial role in the end of traditional state-supported theatre in the Roman Empire.

One of the reasons Byzantine theatre has been neglected in theatre circles is that the evidence is very hard to pin down theoretically. Because its cultural history is manifestly different from that of the West, it evades the grasp of our traditional categories and methodologies, and so demands a great deal more patience. Emerging theoretical approaches, like Joshua Meyrowitz's uses of glocality as both a fact and a cultural process, can provide us with a means of understanding Byzantium's unique theatrical narrative.



## Notes

1. Joshua Meyrowitz's arguments have emphasized the impact of electronic media on the increasing dissociation of physical place from experiential space. See for example "The Rise of Glocality: New Senses of Place and Identity in the Global Village," 21-30 20 October 2008 [www.socialscience.t-mobile.hu/dok/8\\_Meyrowitz.pdf](http://www.socialscience.t-mobile.hu/dok/8_Meyrowitz.pdf).

2. The origin of the term "Byzantine" merits a brief explanation. The capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul), was originally founded as a Greek colony in Antiquity by a General Byzas; hence its original name, *Byzantion*. When the Roman Empire's capital was moved there officially in 330 CE, it was re-christened "New Rome" by Emperor Constantine and soon after his death was named after him. "Byzantium" was used by intellectuals as a marker of their erudition; it was commonplace to show off one's learning by using ancient names for contemporary places and peoples. Modern historians have followed this example.

3. The end of Latin usage in the Eastern Roman Empire is usually dated to the age of Emperor Justinian I (527-565), when legal documents began to be issued in Greek alone. See for example George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. Joan Hussey (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers U P, 1969) 75-6.

4. On the role of Alexandrian scholarship in the preservation and diffusion of Ancient drama, see for example Thomas Falkner, "Scholars versus Actors: Text and Performance in the Greek Tragic Scholia," in *Greek and Roman Actors: Aspects of an Ancient Profession*, ed. Pat Easterling and Edith Hall (New York: Cambridge U P, 2002) 342-61.

5. Although rarely performed today, Menander's plays were widely known in the Eastern Empire. As late as the tenth century CE, scholars produced critical editions of his collected works, and they survived in private collections well into Ottoman times. See Constantine Sathas, "Sur les commentaires byzantins relatifs aux comédies de Ménandre, aux poèmes d'Homère, etc. [On Byzantine Commentaries about Menander's Comedies, Homer's Poems, etc.]" *Annales de l'Association pour l'encouragement des Études Grecques en France* 9 (1875): 187-222.

6. For a historical overview of Greek education see Henri Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité* [A History of Education in Antiquity] 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Paris: Seuil, 1955). For a brief summary of education in the Eastern Empire see J. M. Hussey, *The Byzantine World* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), 145-65.

7. Ruth Webb, a prominent scholar of Late Antique theatre, once observed, "It takes a major adjustment of literary perspective to accept that the very texts which are now considered to represent the height of the fifth-century Athenian achievement—the tragedies of Sophocles or Euripides—appear in this context to have been little more than repositories of lexical and syntactical paradigms" ("A Slavish Art? Language and Grammar in Late Byzantine Education and Society," *Dialogos* 1 (1994): 90). Webb is aware of the modern tendency to project our own aesthetic biases onto ancient and medieval texts, and is dubious of attempts to measure Byzantine education by our own standards.

8. Meyrowitz, "The Rise of Glocality" 22-3.

9. Robert Browning, perhaps the most prominent linguist in the field of Byzantine studies, characterizes the Empire's intellectual works in this way: "Written communication, including Literature, was in an archaizing, imitative, and fossilized form of Greek" (*Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. Kazhdan Alexander (Oxford: Oxford U P, 1991), s.v. "Language," III:1175). As Anthony Kaldellis has noted, "One of the paradoxes of Byzantine studies is that first-rate historians and philologists spend their lives studying a body of literature they detest" (*Procopius of Caesaria: Tyranny, History, and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2004) 38).

10. The title ends with the expression *en Dionysiou* (lit. "in Dionysus"), deliberately leaving the last word to the reader's imagination. As intellectual gamesmanship, then as now, was highly prized, this could be a deliberate play on the common Greek expression *en Christou*, "In Christ's [Name]" usually reserved for Greek Orthodox hagiography. In modern translation this ellipsis is usually filled with the word "Theatre," hence the further simplification to "Defense of the Mimes," since Choricus is clearly talking about comic mimes throughout.

11. Another sign of Hellenic globalism was the habit of locals adopting Greek or Hellenized names.

12. *Apologia Mimorum*, 1. Citations are from an original translation I am currently preparing for publication, based on the critical edition *Choricii Gazaei Opera* (The Works of Choricus of Gaza), ed. R. Foerster and E. Richsteig, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Leipzig, 1929. Reprint, Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1972). A more complete summary of its contents including longer excerpts from the translation is being prepared for publication. See my "On Actors as Honest Working Stiffs: Selections from a New Translation of Choricus of Gaza's 'Defense of the Mimes,'" *Basilissa* 2 (forthcoming).

13. *Apol. Mim.* 10-17, 18.

14. On the troubled relationship between rhetoric and acting, see E. Gunderson, *Staging Masculinity: The Rhetoric of Performance in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2000) 111–48.

15. *Apol. Mim.* 21, italics mine.

16. 32.

17. 80: “If a mime happens to be a prostitute, and performs his own disease (*noson*), he would not move the theatre to laughter or admiration.”

18. 76-7.

19. See Sir Arthur Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, ed. J. Gould and D. M. Lewis, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1988) 126-32 for the term *hypokritēs*’ associations with both leading and supporting actors during the Classical and Hellenistic periods.

20. *Job* 36:13-4 (Septuagint), italics mine. By contrast, the *Revised Standard Version* renders the Hebrew word as “goddess.”

21. As one theologian points out, in the Septuagint “*hypokrinomai* (Hebrew *ānāh*) becomes a sin” (Ceslas Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, trans. James D. Earnest (New York: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994) 3:408). See also Spicq’s account of *hypokrinomai*’s changes in meaning (3:406 ff). Passages in the Septuagint using theatrical terminology include: *Job* 15:34 & 34:30, *2 Maccabees* 6:21, 24, 25, and *Sirach* (*Ecclesiasticus*, or the *Wisdom of the Son of Sirach*, now considered apocryphal) 35:15, 36:2. The passages in *Job* and *Sirach* are in the same spirit as the quote above, while *2 Maccabees* tells of the martyrdom of a Jewish elder, Eleazar, who refuses to dissemble (*hypokrithēnai*) by pretending to eat pagan sacrificial meat at a festival.

22. See Zeev Weiss, “Adopting a Novelty: the Jews and the Roman Games in Palestine,” in *The Roman and Byzantine Near East*, ed. J. H. Humphrey (Portsmouth, RI: *Journal of Roman Archeology* 1999) 23-49.

23. For a collection of direct quotes from the Greek New Testament, see *Concordance to the Novum Testamentum Graece*, ed. Horst Bachmann and Wolfgang A. Slaby, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: De Gruyter, 1987), 1847, s.vv. *hypokrinomai*, *hypokrisis*, *hypocrites*. The Book of Matthew is rich with references to “hypocrites” (see *Matt* 23:13-31), and other references include: *Mark* 7:6, *Luke* 6:42, 11:44, 12:56, and 13:15.

24. *Matt* 6:1-2.

25. See for example, Iosef Vivilakes, “He Theatrike horologia stous pateres tes Ekklesias: Symvole ste melete tes scheseos Ekklesias kai Theatrou” [“Theatrical Terminology among the Church Fathers: a Contribution to the Study of the Relationship between Church and Theatre”], (diss., U of Athens, 1996) 305. For a summary of Vivilakes’ thesis see Walter Puchner, “Acting in the Byzantine Theatre: Evidence and Problems,” in *Greek and Roman Actors: Aspects of an Ancient Profession*, ed. Pat Easterling and Edith Hall (Cambridge U P, 2002) 304-24.

26. Vivilakes concludes, “Although the term *hypokrinomai* is definitely charged with moral content, the old meaning is preserved of performing on the theatrical stage; and indeed this meaning is also used within the context of the ‘world-stage.’ The word *hypokrisis*, on the other hand, principally means feigned behavior, which is associated directly with faith in God; nevertheless, it also signifies imitation and an actor’s playing.” (“Theatrical Terminology,” 307, my translation).

27. Severus of Antioch, “Homily 54.” Although not extant in Greek, this sermon exists in a Syriac translation by James of Edessa, later edited and translated into French, on which the present translation is based. See “Les Homiliae Cathedrales de Sévère d’Antioche,” vol. 1, “Homélie LII à LVII,” trans. Rubens Duval, *Patrologia Orientalis* IV.1 (1908): 55.

28. For a recent analysis of Justinian’s career, see Timothy E. Gregory, *A History of Byzantium* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005) 119-47.

29. On the centralization and “imperialization” of funding for Roman and Byzantine theatre, see Richard Lim, “Consensus and Dissensus on Public Spectacles in Early Byzantium,” in *Conformity and Non-Conformity in Byzantium: Papers Given at the Eighth Conference of the Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, University of New England, Australia, July 1993*, ed. Lynda Garland (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1997) 159-79.

30. See Procopius, *The Secret History*, trans. G. A. Williamson (New York: Penguin, 1966) 168-70.

31. See *Secret History*, 81-6.